

Integrated Health Toolkit

FOR ZAMBIAN
TRADITIONAL LEADERS

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INTRODUCTION


The Importance of Zambian Traditional Leaders to Health


When we think about health, we often think about the Health Centre and the doctors and nurses who help us when we are sick. Yes, we need a doctor or nurse to solve our problems when we are sick. But to avoid getting sick we can educate ourselves and we can act on what we know to prevent many health problems. As Leaders, we can share this information with our community and keep everyone healthy. It might mean that we must make some changes. The changes are needed to have healthier families and healthier communities.

As Traditional Leaders, we must understand that our guidance is needed. How do we start?

 **Find out about our community health.** Are there problems? What are the solutions? Talk to your Neighbourhood Health Committee (NHC) members, Safe Motherhood Action Group (SMAG) members, and the Health Centre staff. Find out what they think are the health problems. Talk to your community. Find out what they think are the health problems. Agree on what must be done and work together.

 **Find out how traditions can help health.** Find out how traditions can hurt health. What is standing in the way of good health? Are there traditions that help health? Find ways to encourage traditions that support good health. Are there traditions that are standing in the way of good health? Find ways to change traditions and change ways of thinking that stop good health.

 **Encourage positive change in your community.** Many of our health problems have to do with our actions or behaviors. Do our children still die from diseases that immunizations can stop? (*Encourage immunisations.*) Do our women still suffer problems during labour and delivery because they do not deliver at the Health Centre? (*Encourage women to deliver at the Health Centre.*) Do we get malaria many times or do many people suffer from malaria? (*Encourage correct malaria prevention and treatment.*)

 **Identify healthy people and healthy families in your community.** Find families in your community who have good health and encourage them. Find out what practices they are doing to be healthy. Can we follow their example? Can we identify something they are doing that is different that keeps them healthy?

Traditional Beliefs and Practices

Some traditions, beliefs and practices support good health

This is good news. Some of our traditions, beliefs and practices promote healthy communities. Traditional leaders should encourage their communities to follow these practices. They should encourage young people to take up these beliefs and to respect these traditions that support good health.

Some examples of good health practices are:

Spend time with family after a new baby is born. Traditionally, women are encouraged to spend some time with their parents as a form of family planning after delivery. Time away also allows them to regain their strength before resuming normal duties. As Traditional leaders, we can encourage families to continue or take up this practice.

Breastfeeding. Women are encouraged to breast feed their children for 2-3 years. This works well to prevent pregnancies and gives our babies and children a healthy start. Traditional Leaders can support this practice by supporting breastfeeding programs and making sure that women are breastfeeding their young children.



Male circumcision. Male circumcision in some areas of Zambia (North Western Province) is a traditional practice. HIV rates in these areas are very low. Our Health Centres promote circumcision and we can support this practice by encouraging boys and men to be circumcised knowing that it will bring our communities better health.

Some examples where we must make a change: traditional practices that do not support good health

Salting food. Women who have just delivered or are in their menses are traditionally not allowed to add salt in the family food to prevent family members from getting pneumonia. There is no risk to family members during these times. In fact, iodised salt helps children's brains grow properly. ***We can change this practice by sharing this information and understanding that iodised salt is healthy to use.***

Eating eggs. Many women are told not to eat eggs during pregnancy due to the fear that the baby may be born bald headed. Actually, eggs are an ideal source of nutrition for pregnant women. Eggs provide

protein and other nutrients that help with a baby's development. Traditional leaders should help the community to understand that eggs are a healthy food for pregnant women. ***We can make a new tradition to be sure that pregnant mothers have eggs as part of their healthy diet.***

Discussing Pregnancy and Delivery In Zambia it can be considered taboo to discuss a woman's pregnancy for fear that the baby could be bewitched. This taboo gets in the way of a mother knowing the facts about her pregnancy, learning about good health practices and having a safe delivery. It also gets in the way of the father being able to support the mother.

Traditional Leaders can start a new tradition where discussing a pregnancy and delivery openly is a good thing. A pregnancy can be celebrated by the family and the community. We can help by encouraging pregnant mothers and their partners to go to the Health Centre for Focused Antenatal Care. We can also tell people it is good to discuss the pregnancy so that the mother might know if something is going wrong with the pregnancy or to know how she and the baby can stay healthy.

Making new traditions and making changes

Some health problems in our communities are because of our behavior and our traditions. As trusted leaders, we can help change traditions that are standing in the way of good health. We can become role models for our community and we can build new traditions that build up healthy communities. Our communities can become models of good health practices for other communities.

Changing what we do can be very difficult. *Knowing something is not enough. We must also do something. We must be motivated to change.* We base our lives on habits and behaviors that have been with us for a long time. These behaviors can even be passed down from one generation to the next. That is why we must be very committed if we want to make changes for better health.

If we understand the need for change and have a common goal, we can help support each other to take action. As Traditional Leaders, we can provide the extra support and guidance needed to make changes that will lead to better health in our own lives and for better health in our communities. ***We can be role models for good health.***

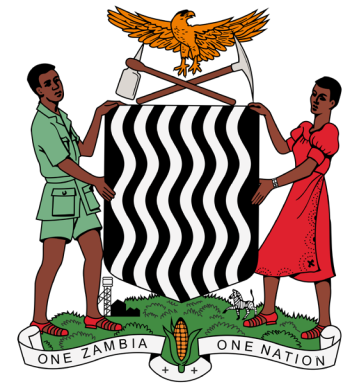
Instead of using our authority to punish people when they do not do what we tell them, it is better to encourage them and give them support. Our community can be proud of the changes we are making. They can feel proud of better health for their families. They can feel proud of a healthier and stronger community. *They can be proud of our leadership.*



Supporting Zambia's Health Centres

“Encourage Health Centres to do good work. Praise their efforts in keeping the community healthy.”

Health Centres provide services to our communities and Traditional Leaders should know about the work that Health Centres do for their community. Traditional Leaders should get to know the people who work and volunteer at the Health Centre so that they have a partnership and can work together.



Traditional Leaders can make a difference at their Health Centres. We can:

- Plan and attend community events
- Raise needed funds
- Persuade community members to help by getting materials, finding available money or organizing people to help with projects
- Encourage community members to go to the Health Centre for their health care needs
- Ensure that your community has good roads and bridges so community members can safely travel to the Health Centre
- Help your community find the resources needed for everyone to be able to travel to the Health Centre

Resolve conflicts

Good health is possible when people work together for a common goal: GOOD HEALTH. Take the lead in resolving conflicts if they arise between the community, Neighbourhood Health Committees (NHC) and the Health Centre. Ensure that the work of the NHC and Health Centre continues. Guide the use of traditional laws and practices by the village authorities to manage conflict in the community. Encourage community members, NHC members, and Health Centre staff to work together in peace and harmony.

Talk to your community about health. Learn and share the health information in this guide. Provide the support needed for your community to make changes for good health.

Your authority can be used for positive change and for good health for all!

SPECIAL TOPIC Safe Motherhood

Safe Motherhood is an important topic. Pregnancy and motherhood is a very special time. A pregnant woman is a very special person. She needs good care and protection. With care and protection, she and her unborn baby can be healthy. Family and community members need to be sure she is getting this care before pregnancy, during pregnancy and after the baby is born.



Below is an introduction to the different aspects of Safe Motherhood from pregnancy to baby care and everything in between: *nutrition in pregnancy, Focused Antenatal Care, malaria prevention in pregnancy, Prevention of HIV transmission, delivery at the health centre and post-natal care.*

Good Nutrition in pregnancy

Nutrition means the foods we eat and the medicines we drink to help keep our bodies healthy. Pregnant women can give their babies a good start in life by having good nutrition. Good nutrition helps pregnant women have the energy they need to have the unborn baby grow well and stay healthy themselves

Eat lots of different kinds of foods

Pregnant mothers need to eat many different kinds of foods to help their unborn baby grow. They also need good foods to keep themselves healthy. *Eating nshima only is not enough to give pregnant mothers the energy they need and it is not enough to help babies grow and develop.*

Every day pregnant mothers should eat relishes, eggs, meat and fish, and fruits and vegetables along with their nshima. Eating lots of different foods gives the mother good energy. Eating lots of different foods helps the unborn baby grow. Most of these fruits and vegetables are grown within the compounds of our households. It is important to know the local fruits and vegetables that can improve the health of the pregnant mother and her unborn child.

Some examples of local fruits include: mangoes, guavas, bananas, and oranges. Some local vegetables are: pumpkin leaves, sweet potato leaves, bondwe, bean leaves and many, many wild vegetables.



Eating a variety of foods help pregnant mothers to stay healthy. If the mother is eating healthy food, the unborn baby has the best chance for a good start. A healthy mother means a healthy baby.

Eat one extra meal each day

Pregnant mothers should eat one extra small and healthy meal a day. This is in addition to the customary meals eaten each day. This extra meal gives the pregnant mother energy. This extra meal helps the baby grow.

Use iodised salt

Families should use only iodised salt in their food. Iodised salt helps stop miscarriages. Iodized salt helps the unborn baby's brain to grow properly. Traditional leaders can help support families by encouraging them to follow the advice of the Health Centres to use iodized salt.



Go to the Health Centre for special pregnancy medicines

Pregnant mothers need to go to the Health Centre for pregnancy medicines. These are important because they help keep the pregnant woman and her unborn baby healthy. The medicines help keep the woman's blood strong and they are given free at the Health Centre. Support the mothers in your community by making sure they are able to go to the Health Centre early in their pregnancy so they get the best care.

Focused Antenatal Care: from the beginning of pregnancy

"*Focused Antenatal Care*" is the special care and protection needed for the health of a pregnant woman and her unborn baby. It is free at the Health Centre. Traditional Leaders should make sure pregnant mothers know about *Focused Antenatal Care* and see that mothers can get transport to go to the Health Centre during their pregnancy.



Whether it is a woman's first pregnancy or her last, going to the Health Centre for Focused Antenatal Care is important. Pregnant mothers learn new things about health and nutrition at every visit. They get the care needed to keep a healthy pregnancy. Make sure that every baby born in our community is a healthy baby. Make sure pregnant woman go the Focused Antenatal care for their entire pregnancy.

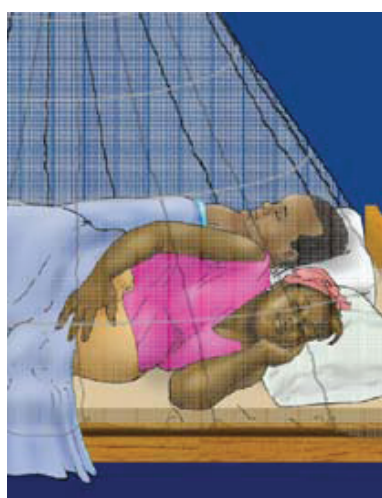
Focused Antenatal Care needs to start from the time a woman knows she is pregnant. We know that many women want to wait until the pregnancy begins to show for their first visit. But it is very important to go earlier. Many health problems can happen in the first three months of pregnancy. *Focused Antenatal Care* can help stop these health problems.

Problems like malaria, high blood pressure and lack of blood can start anytime. A pregnant woman needs special medicines to keep her healthy and stop problems before they happen.

Focused Antenatal Care: four times during pregnancy When all is well with the woman and her pregnancy, she need only come to Focused Antenatal Care four times. If there are problems, the health staff will tell her when to come back to the Health Centre for more care.

Malaria prevention in pregnancy

Malaria can be very dangerous for a pregnant woman. Malaria can make her have weak blood. Malaria can make the pregnant woman very sick. She could even die. It is also very dangerous for her unborn baby. The baby may not grow properly. The baby may be born too early. The baby may be born too small and weak. The baby may even die.



Everyone in the family should sleep under a treated mosquito net every night. Pregnant mothers can get free mosquito nets at the Health Centre.

Sometimes, a pregnant woman may not know she and her baby inside have malaria. She might not have symptoms and may not go for treatment. The good news is that malaria during pregnancy can be stopped. **Malaria during pregnancy can be stopped by sleeping under mosquito nets and taking all of the malaria medicine as instructed.**

Pregnant women should sleep under a treated mosquito net every night to stop malaria. The treated mosquito net stops mosquitoes from biting and giving malaria. With no malaria, the woman and her unborn baby stay healthy and strong.

Health Centres should supply pregnant mothers with treated mosquito nets. Everyone in the family should sleep under the nets to keep malaria out of the house and to keep biting mosquitoes away from the family.



At *Focused Antenatal Care*, a pregnant woman is given the medicine that stops malaria three times during pregnancy. This medicine is safe. She should drink the first medicine early in her pregnancy. That is why it is important she start *Focused Antenatal Care* early in her pregnancy.

The health care provider at the Health Centre will tell the pregnant woman when she should start the first dose of the medicines that stop malaria. They will also tell her when she should take the medicine again.

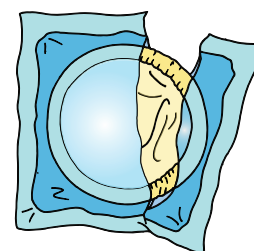
Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV in pregnancy



When a woman is pregnant, she and her partner should go to the health centre for PMTCT care. PMTCT is the “*Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission of HIV.*” Part of PMTCT care is the test that can tell a woman if she has HIV. Another part of this care is getting information on HIV and how she can prevent her baby from getting HIV even if the test for HIV is positive.

Test for HIV together with partner

A pregnant mother and her partner need to first know if one or both of them has HIV. If the mother has HIV, the health worker will give her advice so she does not give HIV to her baby. If the father has HIV but the mother does not, they should use condoms every time they have sex. Using condoms stops the mother from getting HIV from the father. If both the mother and the father are free of HIV, they should remain faithful to each other. That means having no other partners or using condoms every time they have sex with others.



Condoms can protect against HIV. It is important that a mother know if she or her partner is HIV positive. A baby can be born without HIV even if the mother is HIV positive.

Health Centre delivery and care for mothers and newborn babies

Having a baby is a happy event but there is a lot that can go wrong during labour and delivery. When something goes wrong, the pregnant woman needs help from a midwife, doctor or nurse right away. If she delivers at home, she may not get the help she needs. She could get really hurt. She could die. Her baby could die.

The best place for labour and delivery is the Health Centre because there are skilled health workers (doctors, nurses, midwives and others) who can help the pregnant woman and her baby. At the Health Centre, a pregnant mother has a better chance of being well and healthy if something goes wrong. She will have access to help and care even when everything with the delivery is fine.

Traditional Leaders can support families by making sure that the community knows that talking about pregnancy and delivery is a new Zambian tradition!

After the Birth

The time after a baby is born is a dangerous time for the mother and her baby. Problems can happen. The mother or the baby could get very sick. They could even die. It is important to get special care for both the mother and the baby during this time.

Attend post natal care

Post natal care is for both new mothers and their babies. They should go to the Health Centre three times after the baby is born: two days after delivery, six days after delivery, and six weeks after delivery. A health worker will check if the mother and the baby are healthy. If there is a problem, the health worker will give advice and support.

Start a family planning method soon after delivery

It is important for new mothers to have the time and energy to care for their new babies. A family planning method will give the couple time to care for their baby without worrying about another pregnancy too soon.

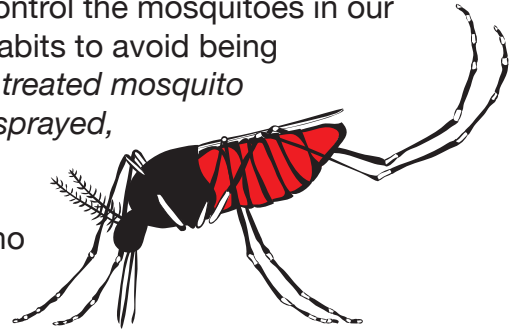
The Zambian tradition of spending time with family after the delivery should be encouraged along with exclusive breastfeeding from birth. Both these traditions will help our communities and we will have healthy families!

Traditional Leaders can improve Safe Motherhood in the community. We can:

- Support your Safe Motherhood Action Groups (SMAGs). Explain the important role of these groups to community members.
- Encourage community members to support their SMAG by finding resources for their work and by listening to their advice. Meet with these volunteers to get updates, attend SMAG meetings, and commit to finding solutions to safe motherhood problems.
- Work to stop traditions that may be hurting pregnant women and babies. Work with the Chief through the indunas to find solutions and to find new and healthier traditions.
- Promote a new tradition – having all pregnant women deliver at the Health Centre. Delivering at the Health Centre is safest for both the woman and her baby.
- Encourage men to work to improve maternal health. Maternal health is not just for women. It is for the whole community.
- Tell community members that violence in the home and violence against women is wrong. Counsel men who are violent against their wives. If the problem persists, report the problem to the chief for further action.
- Mobilize emergency transport for your community to help all women travel quickly to the Health Centre.

SPECIAL TOPIC Preventing Malaria

Malaria is a problem for all of us. It is a disease that is spread by mosquitoes. To avoid becoming sick we must try to control the mosquitoes in our communities. We must also have good habits to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. This means: *using treated mosquito nets correctly, allowing our homes to be sprayed, and making sure pregnant women get the right medicines during pregnancy.* Lastly, we must be sure that everyone who has symptoms is *tested and treated* for malaria.



It's important to get tested at the first sign of the disease—body hotness, chills, vomiting, joint pains. But not everyone has all these signs. Some people, especially children might not have any signs of being sick with malaria. Malaria is especially dangerous for pregnant women and young children. Children's bodies are not strong enough to fight off the illness.

Malaria can make them very sick. They could even die.



For pregnant women, malaria can make them have weak blood. Malaria can make pregnant women and unborn babies very sick. The baby may not grow properly or may be born too early. The baby may be born too small and weak. The mother and baby may even die.

There is good news. Malaria can be stopped. There are ways to stop malaria so pregnant women and young children can stay healthy. And there are easy ways to keep malaria out of your community by supporting ongoing efforts of malaria prevention, testing and treatment. Here are a few ideas:

As with any treatable disease you must be tested to know for sure why you are sick. A test at the Health Center will tell you if you have malaria.

Encourage everyone who has a symptom of malaria to get tested right away. Malaria can be cured if treated in time and with the right medicine.

Indoor spraying prevents malaria

To prevent malaria, **encourage all homes to accept Indoor Residual Spraying.** Indoor Residual Spraying is the spraying of a liquid that kills mosquitoes that rest on your walls. The spray kills mosquitoes. The spray is safe for people.

Medicine during pregnancy stops malaria

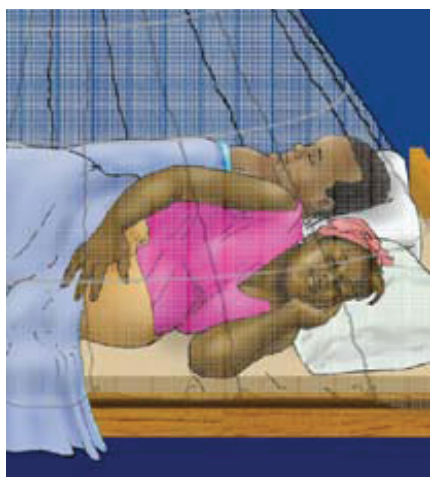
Encourage pregnant women to drink medicine that stops malaria. Drinking the medicine that stops malaria *three times during pregnancy* will

stop malaria. This medicine is safe. The medicine is given free at the Health Centre, the first time early in pregnancy.

Treated mosquito nets prevent malaria

Make sure everyone, *especially children and pregnant women*, sleeps under a treated mosquito net every night.

Sleeping under a treated mosquito net every night stops mosquitoes from biting and giving malaria. Without malaria, a child has the energy and strength to grow strong and healthy. Without malaria, a woman and her unborn baby stay healthy and strong. Without malaria, everyone can go to work and school and stay strong and healthy.



Neighbourhood Health Committees work to prevent malaria - Support these efforts in your community

Ensure that Neighbourhood Health Committees are active and supported in your area. The committee can make sure trained teams are in your community. They promote the use of treated mosquito nets to stop malaria. They show us how to hang the nets, and urge people to go immediately to the nearest Health Centre for testing when they are sick with malaria symptoms.

Those who test positive for malaria are monitored to ensure they complete the entire treatment for malaria. Support the work done in your community by making sure the Committees and Health Centres have the nets, medicine, and transport that they need to do their work.

Take action in your community

Talk to your community members about malaria. Tell them mosquitoes spread malaria. Identify areas of stagnant or standing water where mosquitoes may breed near homes and compounds in the community. Remove standing water. Work to stop malaria illness in your community. Encourage community members to seek health care and discourage self-medication. Malaria can only be confirmed by a blood test, and the only effective treatment is found in the health centres.

Traditional Leaders can be good role models to help Prevent Malaria. We can:

- Have all members of your household sleep under a treated mosquito net each and every night.
- Allow indoor spraying in your home when it's offered.
- Lead by example: get tested for malaria at a community meeting, demonstrating the importance of testing for the disease.

Traditional Leaders can Prevent Malaria in the community. We can:

- Talk about the need for indoor spraying in all homes. Explain that the spraying is safe. It kills only mosquitoes. It does not hurt people. Tell your community to agree to allow trained operators spray into their homes. *Allow indoor spraying in your home.*
- Encourage husbands and other family members to assist our pregnant mothers and escort them to the nearest health facility for the lifesaving medicine that prevents malaria in pregnancy. They need to go three times to receive all the medicine.
- Tour your villages to make sure they are clean and safe. Look for areas of standing water where mosquitoes can breed.
- Introduce local punishment for community members who abuse treated mosquito nets. Enforce by-laws to prosecute those found abusing nets.
- Mobilize emergency transport for your community to help those who are sick travel quickly to the Health Centre.

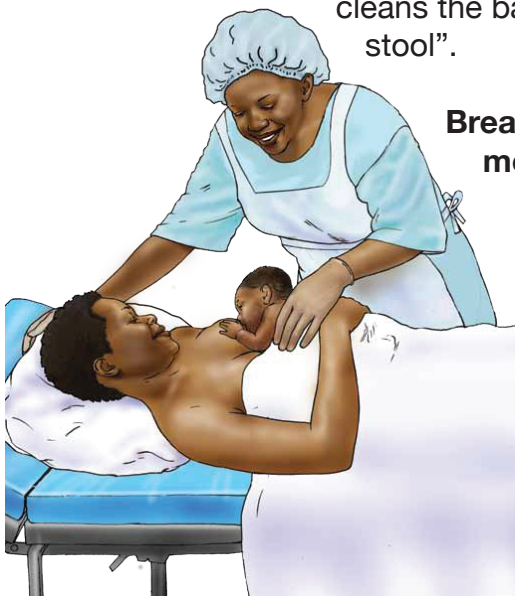
SPECIAL TOPIC Caring for Infants and Young Children

The first 1,000 days are very important in the life of a child. These important first days begin when the mother is pregnant. They continue until the baby is two years old. If children do not get the care they need during the mother's pregnancy and during the first two years of life, they may have bad health for life. With proper care and health services, young children can get the best start in life. The best start in life begins with the first 1,000 days.

Breastfeeding from birth to 2-3 years

Start breastfeeding immediately after birth

Breastfeeding right away after birth can help stop heavy bleeding. Immediate breastfeeding also helps the woman make enough milk to feed the baby. It helps the baby learn how to attach and feed. The first yellow milk is very good for baby. It protects the baby from different diseases. It cleans the baby's gut and helps to clean out the "black stool".



Breastfeeding immediately after birth is good for the mother and for the baby. It's the best way for a healthy start!

Breastfeed exclusively for the first six months

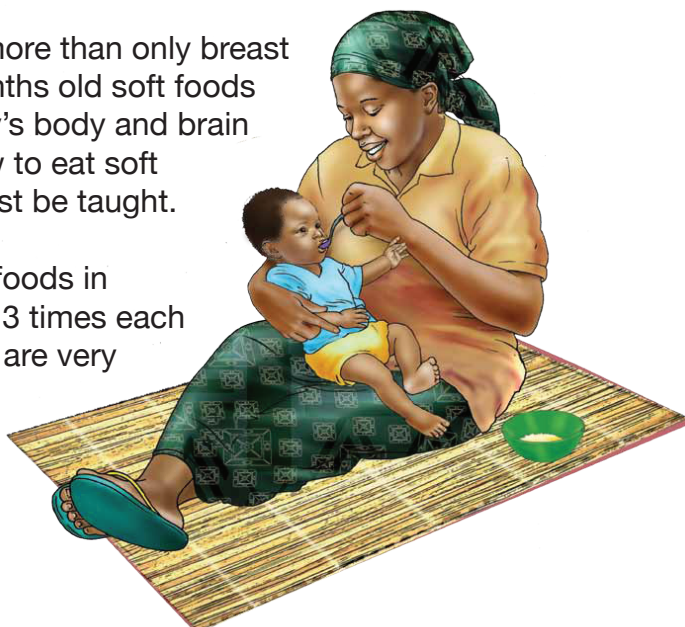
Exclusive breastfeeding means giving the baby breast milk only and no other foods, liquids or herbs until the baby is six months old. It also means breastfeeding the baby whenever the baby is hungry - at least ten times through a day and night. Exclusive breastfeeding gives the baby the best start in life.

Other foods, liquids, and herbs can bring germs to the baby. This can make the baby ill or even die. **Breast milk gives the baby all that is needed to grow well** and reduces the chance of the baby getting sick.

Introduce soft foods with breastfeeding when a baby is 6 months old

At six months, a baby needs more than only breast milk. Giving a baby over 6 months old soft foods and breast milk helps the baby's body and brain grow. Babies do not know how to eat soft foods on their own so they must be taught.

As they grow give babies soft foods in addition to breast milk at least 3 times each day. For their first year babies are very busy growing. Their bodies are growing. Their brains are also growing.



For children to be healthy, strong, and clever, they need to eat at least three meals a day. Each meal should include foods from the three food groups: 1) Energy foods like nshima, rice, potatoes, and cassava, 2) body-building foods such as eggs, fish, meat, and inswa, and 3) protecting foods like pumpkin leaves, rape, mangoes, and pawpaws. The three meals can be a time of learning and love as parents teach their babies to eat on their own.

Breastfeeding for two years

In addition to eating three healthy meals per day, taking breast milk for two years gives a child the best start in life. Breast milk gives the baby and young child what is needed to grow, develop and have a healthy start. Breast milk can also fight diseases. Breastfeeding takes a lot of energy. Breastfeeding mothers need two extra meals per day as well as the usual meals. The extra food helps them make enough breast milk. This helps keep the breast milk strong and healthy.

Preventing diahorrhoeal disease



It is never too early to teach good habits like handwashing!

When a child passes watery stools three times or more in a day, or vomits everything that is eaten then take the child immediately to the nearest health centre. Proper hygiene and sanitation practices can reduce the chances of the children getting sick.

Proper hygiene and sanitation practices include: Using clean water for drinking, food preparation, hand washing and washing up. Using clean water to wash our hands before preparing food, before eating, after using the toilet, after changing baby nappies and any time we have dirty hands. Teach everyone in the community the value of good hygiene. Even babies can get in the practice of washing their hands before they eat and throughout the day!

When the child is sick

When the baby is sick, prepare food the child likes. Feed the child more frequently in small amounts. This helps the child get strength back. It helps put back what is lost in vomiting and diarrhea. The mother should also continue breast-feeding. Once feeling better, the child should eat one extra meal a day to help with recovery and to gain more strength.



Preventing and treating malaria

Malaria is a very serious problem for young children. Their bodies are not strong enough to fight off the illness. Malaria can make them very sick. They could even die. Sleeping under a treated mosquito net every night stops mosquitoes from biting and giving malaria. Without malaria, the child has the energy and strength to grow strong and healthy. With malaria the child is weak and cannot grow strong and healthy.

If a child has fever, take the child to the Health Center for malaria test. Malaria is a dangerous disease. Fever is often a sign of malaria. The baby should be taken to the Health Centre immediately if there is fever. If a child has malaria and does not get treated, the child can become very ill and could even die. Self-treatment is dangerous.

At the Health Centre, the health worker can examine and test the baby and decide what is causing the fever. The health worker can give the right medicines to stop fever. If parents delay in taking their sick child to the Health Centre, it could be too late. The child could die.

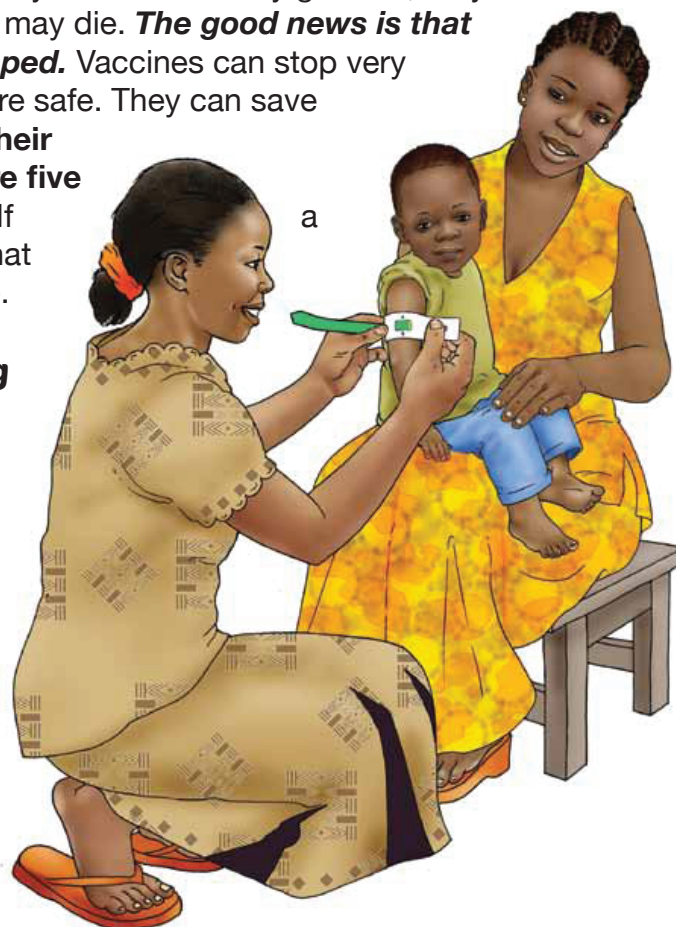
Vaccinations

Ensure children get all vaccines before age of 1 year. The most dangerous period of life is from birth to age two. Babies and children are not strong enough to fight many diseases. If they get sick, they may not grow properly. They may die. ***The good news is that many diseases can be stopped.*** Vaccines can stop very serious diseases. Vaccines are safe. They can save lives. **Parents should take their children to the health centre five times during the first year.** If child receives all vaccines, that child will be protected for life.

Vitamin A and deworming

Ensure children receive Vitamin A and deworming tablets two times each year. Children need help to grow big and strong. Vitamin A can help a child to have a healthy body and good eyes.

Deworming tablets stops illness in children due to worms. This illness can cause weak blood. This illness can stop a child from growing big and strong. Vitamin A and deworming tablets are given two times a year.



Regular visits to the Health Centres should be encouraged. Children can get their vaccinations, vitamins, deworming, malaria tests and have their growth checked. These visits give parents time to ask important questions about their babies.

Traditional Leaders can help infants and young children get the best start in life . We can:

- Encourage families and caretakers to take their infants and children to the Health Centre for vaccinations.
- Make sure the community members wash their hands and their child's hands with soap before handling food and after going to the toilet. This prevents disease from spreading.
- Encourage community members to use a toilet, pit latrine or bury their faeces.
- Talk to everyone about the importance of storing drinking water in a clean, covered bucket. Adding Clorin to drinking water or boiling it for ten minutes makes the water clean to drink.
- Ensure there are community nutrition groups. These groups promote the use of locally available foods for good nutrition for infants and young children.
- Help to change cultural practices that are harmful to children's health. Your SMAG members can tell you what these practices may be, such as giving herbal porridge to newborn babies for protection. Instead, mothers should give only breast milk for the first six months.
- Support NHCs to mobilize resources for child health. Resources can include organizing transport for caretakers to go to health centers during Child Health Week and for routine immunizations and deworming.
- Get involved in the planning meetings for national Child Health events.



SPECIAL TOPIC Adolescent Reproductive Health

Adolescence is a time of many physical and emotional changes. Girls and boys are growing and maturing. They are becoming young women and young men. Adolescents need our guidance. They need our support. They need our advice on growing up.

The most serious problems that adolescents face in Zambia are: HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), drug and alcohol abuse (substance abuse), accidents and violence.

To help stay away from these problems, adolescents need our support to make the right decisions and choices. We can be teachers and role models of good health practices so these young men and woman may follow our example for good health practices. We can help them become healthy and strong adults.

Know where to get trusted information

Adolescents need someone they trust to talk about sex and decisions around starting to have sex. As Traditional Leaders we must know who in our community has information for our young people. The information must come from people they trust and respect. NHC members, a SMAG member, and Health Centre staff can give the best information about sex, pregnancy, condoms, and STI prevention. They can help guide youth to make the best decisions for a bright future.

Understanding sex, pregnancy, and HIV

Young men and women who have sex too early can disturb their education and future plans. The best choice for young men and women is to stay in school, stay healthy and to wait until they are older before having sex. Adolescents should stay away from sex until they are at least 18 years old. They should stay away from sex until they have one mutually faithful partner.



If they are not able to abstain from sex, we should encourage them to follow these following practices: use of condoms every time they have sex, stick to one sexual partner who does not have other sexual partners and get tested for HIV together with their partners.

Alcohol and drugs

Adolescents should drink alcohol responsibly or not at all. Drinking alcohol can make it more difficult to make good decisions. Someone who is drinking may have sex and not remember to use a condom. A lot of youths in Zambia are not employed and they abuse alcohol or drugs as a pass time. This has led to unplanned pregnancies, contracting STIs or HIV, violence and even deaths. Adolescents need our support to make good decisions about drinking and drugs.

Give youth the support they need to make good decisions about their reproductive health. Listen to youth and provide guidance. Do not judge them too quickly. Remember, we were all young once!

Traditional Leaders can help our youth become healthy and strong adults . We can:

- Help **discourage early marriages** in the community so youth can concentrate on school and finding work options.
- Encourage youth to **stay in school**. Youth are the future of our community. Healthy youth are the key to community development!
- Promote cultural beliefs and values that promote positive health seeking practices.
- Learn about what the youth reproductive health groups in your community are doing. Ask for reports on their activities.
- Encourage youth to join youth reproductive health groups that talk about adolescent reproductive health and promote good decision-making.
- For youths who have already started having sex, **encourage them to use a family planning method** so babies are by choice, not chance.
- For youths who have already started having sex, encourage them to **use a condom each and every time** they have sex to stop HIV.
- Encourage community based traditional structures such as insaka to talk to their children about reproductive health. These talks may feel awkward and strange but **our young men and women need honest discussions and advice**.
- **Be a good role model** yourself and encourage other adults to behave in a way that shows the adolescents in the community the benefits of good health practices. By having healthy relationships and having healthy practices regarding our sexual behavior they can be proud of their community and proud of themselves.

SPECIAL TOPIC Family Planning

Family Planning is a decision made by an individual or a couple. It is a voluntary decision about **when to have children, how many children to have and when to stop having children**. Family planning is good for the wife, the husband and the whole family. It gives mothers time to rest between pregnancies and helps a family better manage their resources. Couples or individuals can wait to have a baby until they feel ready. They can have a baby by choice, not by chance.

There are many different family planning methods. They are safe and effective. A health worker can help a woman, a man, or a couple to choose a method that is right for them.

Timing and waiting to start a family

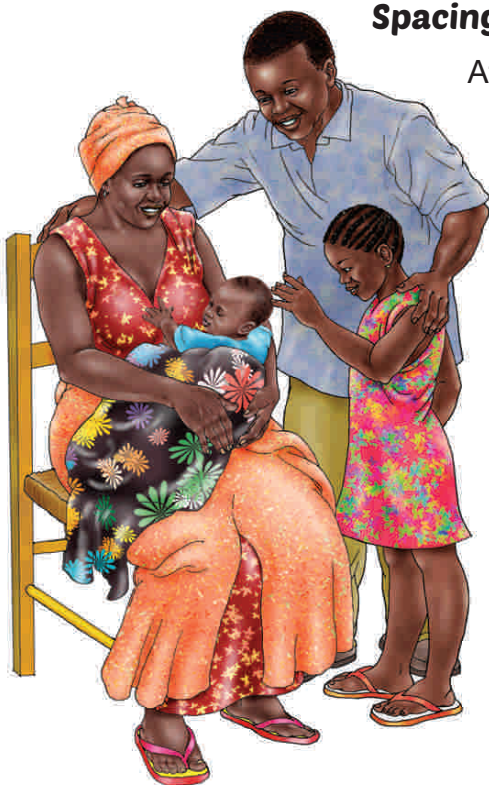
Couples may want to wait to start their family. They may want to save money before having a baby. They may want to start a business or finish school.

Spacing pregnancies

After they have a baby, couples should wait at least two years before looking for another pregnancy. Family planning helps couples space their babies. This gives the mother time to rest her body before becoming pregnant again.

Completing your family

Couples may know how many children they want to have in their family. When they have the desired number, they can use family planning to stop future pregnancies. This helps them have the time to care for their children. This helps them have the number of children they can afford.



Traditional Leaders can promote the use of family planning . We can:

- Work with community based groups to provide assurance to community members that family planning methods are safe.
- Encourage community family planning meetings to discuss the importance of family planning.
- Promote cultural beliefs that support family planning and encourage new traditions for family planning.

SUMMARY Integrated Health Toolkit

Traditional Leaders play an important role in the community. Increasingly, we are called on to support the efforts of others - either by encouraging our community or by learning how to be good role models ourselves. In this case, supporting the Health Centres and supporting our Neighbourhood Health Committees requires us to do both of these things.

This Health Toolkit gives examples of the many ways (large and small) that we, as Traditional Leaders, can bring better health to our communities.

We can encourage traditional practices that are healthy while discouraging the practices that stand in the way of good health. We can make sure our Health Centres are supported - that they have what they need in terms of supplies and transport. We can make sure that families are able to travel safely to Health Centres and that everyone in the community knows where to go for information and services.

Traditional Leaders have this opportunity to encourage positive change and our community can be proud of the changes we are making. They can feel proud of better health for their families. They can feel proud of a healthier and stronger community. *They can be proud of our leadership.*

Talk to your community about health. Share the health information you have learned about in this guide. Provide the support needed for your community to make changes for good health.

**Your authority can be used for positive change
and for good health for all!**

